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Things Chinese and things Estonian Call to turn Estonia into a special economic zone

AS COMPETITION has started in earnest between two rivaling concepts of how would-be sovereign Estonia should manage its economy, strong controversy has been aroused by Academician **ARNO KÖÖRNA**, who recently visited China to get a closer idea of the special economic zones operating in several regions of that country. In a move that many would say is an attempt to rock the boat, Köörna has called for Estonia to follow China's example. On his return to Estonia Köörna talked to **TONIS ERILAID** of Ohtuleht (Evening Paper).

SETTING OUT to China, I thought I was merely going to gather information for my research purposes. But having witnessed the staggering progress China has made in its economy within the short span of some five to ten years, I realized on my trip home that I should put forward a plan aimed at turning Estonia into a special economic zone.

That could be done in Estonia alone, or, if need be, in conjunction with other Baltic Soviet republics. Naturally, only the most general principles could be borrowed from China; they would have to be filled with local substance.

It has been announced that a special economic zone is in the stage of formation in the Soviet Far East and steps are being taken by Lithuania, Leningrad and Odessa to create similar zones.

IMMEDIATELY

What makes the idea of special economic zones especially valuable, to my mind, is that it could be implemented immediately: we do not have to waste time explaining it to the Soviet political and economic leadership, let alone economists.

How is the idea of special economic zones linked with the concept of Estonia's economic self-management?

The creation of a special economic zone would represent the first step towards Estonia's economic autonomy. I stress that in no way is my proposal meant to be an alternative to IME—the project of switching Estonia to economic self-management.

In the draft decree that I have prepared for adoption by the Soviet parliament I have not renounced any basic aspect of the IME project or the fundamental principles contained in the Popular Front documents.

DEPENDENT

There have been claims that a special economic zone would be totally dependent on central authorities in Moscow. To be more precise, it is alleged that such a zone would be looked upon just as a source of hard currency earnings, of more benefit to Union ministries and agencies.

This is not so at all. Under economic autonomy, too, a certain part of the revenue would have to be handed over to Moscow. The same would apply to

hard currency revenues of a special economic zone.

What is important here is that the percentage would be fixed with the participation of foreign firms and for a long period. To change it arbitrarily would in fact be impossible.

And in exchange of the hard currency it allots to the central bank Estonia would receive goods that it needs.

Of course my idea is not perfect and has thus come under criticism. Most of all, though totally groundlessly, I have been accused of abandoning the idea of Estonia's economic autonomy.

DEBATE

Work on finalizing the IME project is in progress, but in another month or so it will be ready to undergo nationwide debate. Then it will have to cover a long way in the corridors of power before everything is accepted (or rejected). In that sense the creation of a special economic zone would indeed save time. But after all, that is not the main thing.

The main thing is to quickly and decisively do away with the backwardness of our economy. Patriotism, good intentions and strong muscles are not enough if we want to rapidly penetrate into the world market, if we want to put on their feet the industrial enterprises whose out-stallions have become outdated.

REPAYMENT

To redouble labour productivity we need the latest technologies and the best equipment. Left to our own resources we won't cope with that; if we started borrowing hard currency, we would soon be faced with difficulties in repayment.

The only thing to do is to get into contact with foreign companies the way the Chinese have. And we should look for partners not only in Finland but also elsewhere as competition in this sphere would only be of help.

As to the time factor, I think it is of great importance. Creating a special economic zone would enable us to quickly switch over from talk to action. We have reached a stage where mere discussions are not enough.

In case my proposal meets with support we could start action immediately. And naturally that would not mean giving up

Internationalist Movement unfolds its intentions

By JOEL AAV

ON OCTOBER 12 the central newspapers of Estonia carried an outline of the basic principles of the Internationalist Movement, an undefined but vociferous grouping which made its first major appearance at a rally with a strong Russian chauvinist flavour in Tallinn on July 19.

Although claiming that the programme of the Popular Front (PF) and the basic principles of the Internationalist Movement have much more common features than differences, the so-called internationalists have based their programme outline on criticizing the PF.

Commenting on what has been presented as the outline of the activity of the Internationalist Movement (IM) philosopher Ülo Kaevats said: "Completely lacking a logical backbone, this is but a set of

loosely connected contradictory statements."

The IM document attacks the programme of the PF by saying that it includes views that reflect only the national interests of the Estonians, the indigenous population in this republic, going outside the framework of democratic internationalist principles.

The IM is of the opinion that in providing solutions to the interethnic issue the PF fails to pay due attention to the real demographic situation that has historically evolved in Estonia. This is a reference to the ethnic composition in this republic—60 per cent are Estonians and 40, mainly Russians.

If the compilers of the IM document had studied closely the PF documents they would have noticed that the PF

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Out of the prison garb



AFTER FIVE years in prison ENN TARTO, the last political prisoner of Estonia, arrived in his home town Tartu on the morning of October 17.

Tarto was sentenced under the notorious Article 68 of the Criminal Code for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". Among the welcoming crowd was Mart Niklus, another political prisoner who was released this past July.

On the afternoon of October 17 Tarto was in Tallinn where his arrival put an end to the picket outside the Estonian SSR Supreme Court (see photo). Human rights activists demanding the release of Estonian political prisoners and the

decriminalization of a number of offences had been picketing there since July 1.

Like Mart Niklus, Tarto learned of his release through Estonian newspapers while sitting in prison in Perm, Russia. Initially the prison authorities called the newspaper report "misinformation".

Addressing the crowd who had gathered to meet him at the railway station Tarto said he was not satisfied with pardoning and was going to seek rehabilitation for himself. He added he had not appealed for mercy and had never pleaded guilty.

Photo by Estonian Telegraph Agency